




Office of the Director
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767
Phone (512) 972-5010 Fax (512) 972-5016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Stephanie Hayden, Director 
DATE: November 8, 2019
SUBJECT: Resolution No. 20190131-028 Contract with Front Steps Inc., to Provide Shelter Operations and Services for the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH)

This memorandum is intended to provide a status update on the actions taken to respond to the January 31, 2019, City Council approved Resolution No. 20190131-28 authorizing staff to negotiate and execute a multi-term contract with Front Steps Inc., to provide shelter operations and services for the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH). As you may recall, staff also received additional direction from the dias to solicit feedback from the shelter and social service providers to better understand why the City received so few responses to the solicitation.

As a follow-up to the additional direction, Austin Public Health (APH) staff created a five question survey that was sent to all funded agencies (approximately 70 in total). Sixteen agencies responded to the survey.

Questions and Responses

Q1. Please indicate which factor(s) may have contributed to your agency not submitting a response to the ARCH operations RFQS (select all that apply.)

- a) Funding Amount
- b) Timing
- c) Scope not aligned with mission
- d) Other

Response: 87.5% of the respondents indicated that the scope did not align with their mission.



Q2. If funding amount was a factor contributing to your agency not submitting a response, was the amount:

a) Too high

b) Too low

Response: There were two respondents for this question, and both indicated that the funding amount was too low.

Q3. Suggested Annual Amount

Response: None of the respondents answered this question.

Q4. If funding amount was a factor contributing to your agency not submitting a response, please provide additional information about the funding amount.

Response: “The amount needed to be clearly contained in a comprehensive approach, including the contracted functions expected at the ARCH, a significant facility upgrade and renovation of the ARCH, alternative sheltering sites and horizontal commitments across City Departments, not just the good work of H&HS. In other words, not just low funding with low expectations.”

Q5. Please provide any additional feedback.

Response: “We need a City Homeless leader/manager with a bold vision, inclusive planning, and ambitious goals and funding with timely decision making.”

Conclusions

1. There is limited capacity in Austin concerning the number of organizations that provide shelter services as a core part of their work/ mission statement.
2. There is a perception that available funding is insufficient. APH staff will research City-funded shelters in peer cities to get a comparison and consider that information when drafting Request For Solicitations for future shelter operations and any additional recommendations for Council consideration.



If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 512-972-5010.

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager
Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager
Lori Pampilo Harris, Homeless Strategy Officer